

## State Assessment of Strengths and Needs

### *1. What specific strengths of the agency's programs has the team identified?*

#### **Re-entry Rate in Foster Care**

Missouri Child and Family Services Review Data Profile provide the aggregated data for determining substantial conformity. Missouri's percentage of children who re-entered care within twelve months of a prior foster care episode was 8.5% which exceeds the federal standard set at 8.6% or less. Beginning in FFY-00, Missouri data was showing a trend where less children was re-entering care than the year before. The evidence for the continuing improvement for this data element is under review to determine attributes. A hypothesis for the improvement is the increased use of Family Support Team Meetings (FSTM). When FCOOH program introduced the concept of having FSTM's within 24 and 72 hours after the removal of a child, and continued every thirty days until adjudication, the involvement of families to jointly determine services needed and helping create case plans became invaluable. Also, the family involvement and participation in the decision making process should have a direct effect in the outcome for their child.

#### **Services Array**

Missouri offers a wide array of services that are available throughout the state. Those services include (but are not all inclusive); mental health (both contracted and in-house providers), parent aide services (homemaker, supervising visits, transportation), mentors, independent living services, parent education classes, transportation services, intensive in-home services and drug and alcohol treatment. There are a few services more limited in availability requiring families to travel to neighboring circuits or wait until the service is available. These services include family reunification and medicaid dental providers. Some families may be prohibited from accessing some of the services due to their inability to pay. Therefore, some of the community services have a sliding fee scale which is subsidized through a variety of ways.

*2. What specific needs has the team identified that warrant further examination in the onsite review? Note which of these needs are the most critical to the outcomes under safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families in the State.*

#### **Permanency--Family Support Team Meetings**

FSTM is a vehicle to move toward permanency plans quicker and appropriately. The formal process began several years ago with the beginning of the Family-Centered Out-Of-Home approach for children in alternative care. This approach concentrated on engaging families in the hours soon after a child was removed from their home. The up-front engaging of families helped expedite change quicker. The concept of using relative care prior to exploring foster homes became the "first" option for children's placement. The FSTM has evolved over time and is useful in relationship and trust building between children's service workers and families.

**Permanency—Frequent Moves**

Children in Missouri's foster care system experience on average, over three changes in placement while in the state's care and custody. Missouri does recognize the potential negative impact of a child moving from one placement to another. Strategies are being analyzed such as improved initial assessments, better matching of children with placement providers, and enhancements for expediting timely permanence.

**Well-Being—Limited Dental Care**

The Practice Development Review has revealed there is a need for Medicaid Dental providers. Children in the care and custody of the child welfare system have limited access to dental care as a result. Some community groups have been creative in their efforts to solve this need. Some communities offer car pooling opportunities to travel outside of the area in which they live to obtain dental care. Others have explored the use of a dental van to provide cleanings, fillings, and routine exams. The dental van is making plans to provide services statewide but currently only serves Jackson County.

3. *Which three locations, e.g., counties or regions, in the State are most appropriate for examining the strengths and concerns noted above in the onsite review?*